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Counterfeiting of Veterinary Medical Products

Cindy L. Burnsteel, DVM
Cindy.burnsteel@fda.hhs.gov
Director, Division of Therapeutic Drugs for Food Animals
Office of New Animal Drug Evaluation
Center for Veterinary Medicine
U.S. Food and Drug Administration

Counterfeiting - definition

• The WHO definition: "A "counterfeit" medicine is one which is deliberately and fraudulently mislabelled with respect to identity and/or source."

• The fraud in counterfeit medications can range anywhere from medications sold with no active medicine in them at all to those who have the right chemical ingredient but not in the right amount. On many occasions, the correct chemical ingredient may be mixed with one or more other ingredients, which may either be harmless (inert) fillers or chemicals that are actively harmful to the patient.
Counterfeit/Substandard Veterinary Drugs

• Major Problem Worldwide
• Counterfeiting is greatest in those regions where the regulatory and legal oversight is weakest. This situation puts rural and the poorer segments of the population at a particular disadvantage.
• Many counterfeit human drugs are smuggled into countries as animal feeds

% Counterfeit

• Most industrialized countries with effective regulatory systems and market control (e.g. USA, most of EU, Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand) have an extremely low proportion, i.e. significantly less than 1% of the market value
• Many countries in Africa and parts of Asia and Latin America have areas where more than 30% of the medicines on sale can be counterfeit
• Medicines purchased over the Internet from illegal sites that conceal their physical address are counterfeit in over 50% of cases.
Economic Impact

Even though it is impossible to know with certainty the global economic impact of this industry, most estimates exceed $75 billion annually. The WCO (World Customs Organization) extends that estimate to more than $200 billion a year industry. Here is an excerpt from a June 2010 Reuters article: "Fake or substandard versions of medicines are often hidden in cargoes sent on circuitous routes to mask their country of origin. The World Trade Organization says fake anti-malaria drugs kill 100,000 Africans a year and the black market deprives governments of 2.5-5 percent of their revenue."

Counterfeit/Substandard Veterinary Drugs

Counterfeit/Substandard Veterinary Drug packages may look acceptable

– Veterinary Drugs may be stolen from one country, stored improperly and sold in another country
– Counterfeit drug packaging may be indistinguishable from approved drug packaging
Core Mission

Our public health mission succeeds when we put in the hands of the user and approved:

- safe,
- effective,
- quality manufactured,
- properly labeled

new animal drug to meet therapeutic and production needs of animals

Counterfeit/Substandard Veterinary Drugs

Objective is to control sale and distribution from manufacturing to use to be capable of verifying whether a medicine is genuine and properly stored at all points
Counterfeit/Substandard Veterinary Drugs

Strategies to Consider:

- An active pharmacovigilance reporting system which collects reports on adverse drug experiences and veterinary drug product quality issues (e.g. ineffectiveness)
- Inspection of manufacturers, distributors and retailers
- Testing of veterinary drug samples collected during inspections
- Collaboration among government and pharmaceutical industry to stop illegal veterinary drugs

INTERPOL

- INTERPOL is the world’s largest international police organization, with 190 member countries
- The Organization's official name is "ICPO–INTERPOL".
- The official abbreviation "ICPO" stands for 'International Criminal Police Organization'. In French this is "O.I.P.C.", which stands for "Organisation internationale de police criminelle".
- The word "INTERPOL" is a contraction of "international police", and was chosen in 1946 as the telegraphic address.
- The vision: "Connecting police for a safer world".
INTERPOL

• INTERPOL is training individuals from a variety of sectors in combating pharmaceutical crime.
• Training is accompanied by the distribution of an investigative guide produced by the Permanent Forum on International Pharmaceutical Crime (available in six languages).
• Practical training is delivered in advance of an on-the-ground intervention while specialized courses focus on investigative techniques. Participating officers come from police, customs and drug regulatory authorities, government departments and independent institutes. The assistance of trainers from the private sector completes the exchange of expertise and best practice.

INTERPOL

• offer e-learning opportunities. Authorized officials from the INTERPOL community and other partners are able to access an online course to get basic knowledge on different topics. These include:
  – Investigation of pharmaceutical crime;
  – Information technology and traceability;
  – Collection of evidence;
  – Preparation of a judicial case.
INTERPOL

INTERPOL’s Intellectual Property (counterfeiting, piracy, smuggling) crime program activities revolve around three main areas:

– raising awareness and capacity building,
– delivering integrated training and operations,
– international co-operation to assist all 190 member countries in identifying the individuals and transnational crime networks behind the trafficking of counterfeit and illicit goods.

INTERPOL report on Pharmaceutical Crime

• Organized criminal networks are attracted by the huge profits to be made through pharmaceutical crime. They operate across national borders in activities that include the import, export, manufacture and distribution of counterfeit and illicit medicines. Coordinated and cross-sector action on an international level is therefore vital in order to identify, investigate and prosecute the criminals behind these crimes.
INTERPOL
Operation Pangea IV

- **20-27 September 2011**
- Operation Pangea is an international week of action against the online sale of counterfeit and illicit medicines and highlighting the dangers of buying medicines online. The annual operation brings together customs, health regulators, national police and the private sector from countries around the world.
- Activities target the three principal components used by illegal websites to conduct their trade – the Internet Service Provider (ISP), payment systems and the delivery service.
- Results:
  - confiscated 2.4 million illicit and fake pills, worth USD$6.3 million
  - coordinated attacks in 81 countries
  - 13,500 websites were shut down
  - 55 individuals detained

INTERPOL
Operation Jupiter V

- **January – December 2010**
- **INTERPOL-led operation in Americas nets fakes worth 200 million dollars**
- 13 countries participated - Brazil, Paraguay, Argentina (Tri-border zone); Peru, Panama, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, French Guyana, Suriname, Uruguay, and Venezuela
- Results:
  - 944 people detained
  - 7.5 million counterfeit items seized
  - USD$208 ($340) million street value
INTERPOL – Operation Maya

- March 1-15, 2012
- “Fakes worth millions seized in INTERPOL-led operation across Americas”
- 11 countries participated: Belize, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama and the USA.
- Results:
  - Fake goods including toys, computer software, clothing, beauty products, engine oil and cigarettes worth nearly USD$30 million seized
  - 200 arrested/under investigation

INTERPOL – Ongoing Activity

2011/NCB-AME/21/CRAM
RECOMMENDATION No. 3
Subject: Combating pharmaceutical crime in the Caribbean region

The 21st ICPO-INTERPOL Americas Regional Conference, meeting in Aruba from 6 to 8 July 2011......

- CONSIDERING the serious implications for the public health and safety of often unknowing patients either obtaining or receiving counterfeit medical products,
- RECOMMENDS that National Central Bureaus in the Americas region develop operational multidisciplinary coordinated activities in the region in 2011 on the model of “Operation Pangea” related to illicit sales of medicines, including trainings and a high level Seminar in 2012;
- RECOMMENDS National Central Bureaus to mobilize and coordinate with relevant ministries and governments officials to support the fight against counterfeit medical products and pharmaceutical crime in the region;....
INTERPOL – Central America

- 18 September 2012: US-funded programme places INTERPOL global tools in hands of frontline officers across Central America
- PANAMA CITY, Panama – Law enforcement officials across Central America now have direct access to INTERPOL’s global tools as part of a US-funded project to support efforts in addressing regional security threats including transnational gangs, weapons, drugs and human trafficking.
- The USD 2.5 million programme means that specialist investigators in Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama can now access and conduct real time searches of INTERPOL’s global databases.

INTERPOL – Central America

- The project, supported by INTERPOL’s National Central Bureau (NCB) in Washington DC, also provides for the equipment maintenance and training sessions to ensure the continued widest possible use of the facilities.
- Head of NCB Washington and INTERPOL Executive Committee Delegate for the Americas, Timothy Williams said: "Not only will this project strengthen the international reach of INTERPOL and lead to an increase in arrests worldwide, it will optimize the role of law enforcement in countries across Central America that would greatly benefit from resources available through INTERPOL. This project will improve their efficiency and better connect neighboring countries to necessary resources and global crime databases, so that they may fight crime together and bring criminals to justice."
Closing thought…

• Aline Plançon, manager of INTERPOL’s Medical Products Counterfeiting and Pharmaceutical Crime (MPCPC) unit,
  – “Ultimately, we hope that by raising public awareness about the dangers of illegal internet pharmacies, people will exercise greater care when purchasing medicines on the Internet.”